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MEDIA ADVISORY

COMMERCIAL COOPERATION U.S. / SUBSAHARAN AFRICA AFRICAN WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM (AWEP)

Follow-on and improvement training

March, 7-12, 2011, Le Meridien President Hotel

The U.S. Embassy in Dakar, in partnership with Vital Voices Global Partnership and ExxonMobil, will provide a follow-on training and development program for participants of the 2010 African Women's Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP) from March 10-12, 2011, at the Le Meridien President Hotel.

The African Women's Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP) is an on-going initiative launched in July 2010 at the 2010 AGOA Forum on U.S. / Sub-Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation, Washington. The goal of the AWEP program is to increase the integration of African businesswomen into the global economy through training, increased trade relations, and business activity with U.S. businesses and the U.S. Government.

AWEP, which was organized by the Department of State's Bureau of Economic, Energy and Business Bureau and coordinated through the DOS International Visitor Leadership Program, brought together 34 businesswomen from AGOA-eligible countries to the U.S. for trade and advocacy-related training and to attend the AGOA Forum. The program was also substantially supported by USAID and the State Department's Bureau of African Affairs.

This second of two follow-on trainings will gather businesswomen, entrepreneurs, and business advocates from more than 13 Francophone and Lusophone African countries. The first follow-on training took place in Abuja, Nigeria in December 2010. The AWEP follow-on trainings are an effort to support women's economic empowerment, an essential driver of prosperity for Senegal and the rest of Africa.

Training objectives are:

- Provide a forum for sharing effective strategies for business growth (*i.e.* scaling up);
- Provide an opportunity for networking amongst AWEP participants and facilitate sharing of their personal follow-on activities and business successes to date;
- Inspire women toward greater AGOA utilization with first-hand testimonials and dialogue with women who have succeeded under AGOA; and
- Facilitate the development of Action Plans to encourage AWEP alumni to continue their efforts in business and in women's economic empowerment. Vital Voices will monitor participation in and implementation of these action plans.

The press is invited to meet the women at the close of the program on March 11, between 5:00 p.m.-5:45 p.m. at Le Meridien President.

Confirmation of participation will be until Thursday, March 10, 2011, at 4:00 pm.

To confirm your attendance or for more information, please contact Ndeye Fatou Wilane by phone at 33 829 2128 or by email at WilaneNF@state.gov.

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